

425-429 Eleventh St. (Commercial Building)
(Alla-Scala Restaurant)
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-481

HABS
DC,
WASH,
275-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

425-429 Eleventh Street, N.W. (Commercial Building)
(Alla Scala Restaurant) HABS No. DC-481

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275-

Location: Square 348, Lot 19, East side of Eleventh Street between 'E' Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D.C.

Present Owner: Villa O'Este, Inc. (Spring 1980).

Present Occupant and Use: Alla Scala Restaurant

Future Use: The structure will be incorporated into a new, full block multi-use structure, designed by Hartman-Cox with Smith Segretti Tepper, and built for developers D.W. Evans and R.S. Cohen.

Significance: This structure is representative of Second Renaissance Revival design in commercial Washington at the turn of the Twentieth Century. Fashioned after fire-house designs of the the Nineteenth Century, 425-429 Eleventh Street has maintained most of its original architectural integrity and is still a major contributing factor to the east side of Eleventh Street.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Date of erection: Initial construction of this building can be estimated between 1902-1903, although no original permit is available. An assessment increase from \$2600 in 1902 to \$11,000 in 1911, gives initial evidence of estimated construction dates. Two permits dated 18 October 1899 and 28 July 1903, were incorrectly recorded in the permit listings, therefore are not available for viewing. Permit #2591, 31 May 1905, identifies the extant building by story count and tenant, so it is possible to deduce that the incorrectly recorded permit of 1903 was that of initial construction. The 1903 Baist's map of Washington is the first evidence of the building on an atlas of this type in Washington. Note should also be made that the prop-

erty changed hands in 1902 (See Section I, A, 3).

2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands. References are the District of Columbia General Assessment Records and the District of Columbia Recorder of Deeds.

1839 Assessed under ownership of William McLean Cripps.

1902 Deed 23 November 1902, Recorded 24 November 1902 in
Liber 694, Folio 230.

James B. Nicholson, Trustee

to

Anna Marie Clarke.

1914 Deed 14 April 1914, Recorded 15 April 1914 in
Liber 3701, Folio 204.

Daniel Clarke Waggaman

to

Ellen Morse.

1977 Deed 6 November 1977, Recorded 7 November 1977 in
Instrument #35999.

Morse Estate

to

Charles M. Schneider (Villa D'Este, Inc.).

1980 Sale pending to 1001 Pennsylvania Associates.

4. Builder: Unknown.
5. Original Plans and Construction: Functioning originally as a warehouse for the Morrison Paper Company, upper floors were well

braced, open spaces. This upper level layout has remained relatively unchanged. The three round-head arches on the facade were originally fully glass covered, with wood frames for small casement windows and large doorways on street level to allow for loading and unloading materials necessary for the printing supply company located here.

6. Alterations and additions: Building permits cited are as follows:

- a. In 1905, (31 May), Permit #2591 called for the erection of two brick chimneys as well as the laying of concrete slabs to accommodate low pressure boilers for the "Printers Supply Company". The chimneys are extant on the southern facade. No architect or contractor are recorded.
- b. When a lease with the "Washington Herald" was signed in 1916, two brick foundations were constructed from the cellar to the first floor to carry the printing presses at the first floor level (Permit #3358, 4 February 1916). No architect or contractor are recorded.
- c. In 1923, Architects Voght and Didden removed an interior brick pier and substituted steel girders, and added five new toilets, a marquis, a kitchen, and a new underground vault. (Permit #5373, 21 December 1923).
- d. The William Morris Construction firm, in 1927, removed the show window projections on Eleventh Street and connected two interior first floor rooms with a 5'0" x 10'0" opening. The old wall in the rear of the building was removed and replaced with a new wall at the stairwell (28 April 1927, Permit #8645).

- e. Floor joists (3" x 12") were installed in 1927, between existing joists from the east end wall eight feet in to the building to add further support for "Washington Herald" equipment (Permit #2948, 14 October 1927).
- f. In 1944, the lease on 427 Eleventh Street was transferred to The Chicken Hut Restaurant, although they occupied the entire building. At this time, new fire stairs were erected and the entrance was changed (in design, not location). The designer was H. Zeller (2 June 1944, Permit #269783; See postcard, supplemental material).
- g. The building was steam-cleaned in 1946 (Permit #285929), and in 1953, a new marquis and shop windows were erected (Permit #A47939, 29 September 1953).

B. Historical Persons and Events Associated with the Structure:

This building was originally built as the warehouse for the Ebenezer Morrison Paper Company. The sales headquarters was located at 805 'D' Street from its establishment in 1866 until 1891. They then moved into 1009 'D' Street and remained here until 1978. The warehouse on Eleventh Street was maintained by the Morrison Paper Company until 1913. The building was vacant for approximately one year, at which time the "Washington Herald" moved their presses here. In 1925, Schneiders Cafe was located at 425-429 Eleventh Street. In 1930, the Capri Restaurant opened in the building. After this, Angelo's Restaurant located here, and in 1944, the Chicken Hut opened. The restaurant was later known as Caruso's. The Alla Scala Restaurant has been here since 1975. All restaurants from the Capri (1930) to the Alla Scala (1975), were under the same ownership.

C. Bibliography

1. Primary Sources

District of Columbia Deed Records. Recorder of Deeds, Washington, D.C.

District of Columbia Tax Assessment Records, 1839-1922. National Archives, Environmental Resources Division, Record Group 351, Washington, D.C.

District of Columbia Building Permits, 1877-1950. National Archives, Environmental Resources Division, Record Group 351.

W. Hunter, Personal Postcard Collection.

2. Secondary Sources

All of the following are available at the Washingtoniana Room of the Martin Luther King Library, Washington, D.C.

Baist Real Estate Atlas Collection.

Polk's District of Columbia Directories 1865-1979.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: As built, 425-429 Eleventh Street was a direct application of Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century fire-house design. Built to house a printing supply company in an area heavily endowed with printing businesses, the double story round-head arched entrances allowed for wide door openings for ease of equipment mobility and efficient loading/unloading, as no alley entrance for such purposes was available.

The use of rusticated brick pattern appearing as cut stone is a dominant element of the Second Renaissance Revival facade. Triple key-

stones of the Mannerist tradition top the double height round-head arches at the second story level, and single keystones adorn the third floor windows.

2. Condition of the fabric

- a. Facade: The upper floors are in very good condition. The street level entrance has been covered with permastone, therefore it is impossible to tell the condition of materials beneath (if any remain) without removal of the covering.
- b. Windows: The upper story windows remain in fair condition and appear to be original. Only portions of the second level windows remain unboarded. The far left (north) and center frames are original and are in fair condition. The far right (south) window has been replaced with two one-over-one double-hung sash windows, which are also in fair condition.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: 425-429 Eleventh Street is three bays wide (double-width bays) and three stories high, with a cellar and attic crawl space. It is rectangular in shape with a wide ell at the rear (not an addition). Overall dimensions are 51'0" x 100'0".
2. Foundations: Probably of concrete and brick.
3. Wall fenestration, finish and color: The building at 425-427 Eleventh Street is three bays wide and three stories tall with a basement and attic crawl space. The facade is an ivory pressed-brick laid in courses of six, giving the entire facade the appearance of rusticated limestone. Bays are formed by three two-story round-head arches beginning at street level. The dropped triple keystones are of cast concrete and voissours

are of brick. At street level, brickwork has been covered with perma-stone. A projecting horizontal panel with recessed center rests on the keystones of the arches between the second and third stories, and extends the width of the facade.

Third floor windows are centered over the arches. The center window is flanked by two narrow windows, and each window on this level has a dropped, single keystone and voissours formed in brick. Above third floor windows is a large projecting entablature with a stepped frieze and cornice. Above this is a parapet wall ornamented with a recessed panel with checkerboard brick cresting. The roofline has a slightly lowered center with molding and scrolls at each end of the molding.

There are three doorways at street level. At offset left is a wood and glass door set in from the glass and perma-stone show window. The center and primary entrance doors are of wood and are protected by a projecting arched cloth awning. The offset right door is of steel and glass.

Windows at the second and third floors are one-over-one double-hung sash and single-paned hinged. The interior of the arches on the second floor surrounding the windows is covered with painted wood.

4. Structural system: Loadbearing brick walls and a combination of brick, iron and wood vertical piers with 3" x 12" and 2" x 10" wooden floor joists make up the support system.. Two brick foundations (installed in 1916, Permit #3358) run from the cellar to the first floor. One steel girder (whereabouts unknown) replaced a brick pier in 1923 (Permit #5373).

5. Chimneys: A total of three brick chimneys are located in the rear and south of the building.
6. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: The principal entrance to the Alla Scala Restaurant is in the center bay. The door is wood with a small glass window, and is set in a metal frame. The offset right secondary entrance is a steel and glass door in a steel frame.
 - b. Windows: Third floor windows are single-paned casement type with wood frames. The two flanking windows of the center window are single-paned fixed windows. On the second floor, the left (north) window visible is a shortened version of the original two single-paned, semi-arched, swing-out windows in wood frames. Center bay remaining frame is identical to the aforementioned left (north) window, but glass panes have been replaced with boards. Far right (east) windows are narrow, six-over-six double-hung sash, in a squared-off wood frame^s with wood mullions. The complete original glass openings at the second level have been boarded over. On street level, two steel and glass show windows project three feet from the building line and are offset left and right.
7. Cornice: Above the third floor windows is a large projecting entablature with a stepped frieze and cornice. Above this is a parapet wall ornamented with a recessed panel with checkerboard brick cresting. The roofline has a slightly lowered center with molding and scrolls at each end of the molding.
8. Roof: The roof is flat, and slightly sloped to the east with tin surface.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor plans

a. Basement: The basement is located only under a portion of the building, measuring 51' x 50'. It is an open, unfinished room with structural piers and exposed concrete floors. Two small storage rooms exist along the north wall.

b. First floor: Entry into the first floor is to a large dining area with an arched opening to the north to an elongated bar. Kitchen space is in the rear (east) with entrance on the south side of the east wall. Restrooms are located between the bar and the kitchen wall. A staircase is located immediately to the south of the entrance.

At the base of the staircase is an entrance to a small carryout restaurant which also has its own entrance in the southern bay of the facade. (It is operated and owned by the Alla Scala.)

c. Second floor: Presently unused, the second floor is a large open space with a bar along the north wall. Entry to two small rooms is gained through a doorway at the back wall on the left (north).

d. Third floor: This space is completely open with exposed brick walls, pressed metal ceiling and wood and brick piers. A ladder at the far north wall lowers for access to the attic. This space is open for the length of the building and used for storage of discarded items.

2. 2. Stairways: The first floor staircase is located directly to the south of the main entrance. It is a half-turn staircase, carpeted, with wood paneling from stair level to wood railing. The second floor staircase is located along the left (north) wall, behind the back

wall separating large unused dining area and small offices. Made of unfinished wood, it is a half-turn staircase with a wood railing. Directly above the third floor staircase landing is a hand lowered wooden stair/ladder on hinges, leading to the attic.

3. Flooring: The first floor is wood with a carpet covering in the dining areas, and restrooms are tiled. The second and third floors are tongue-in-groove wood.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The first and second floor walls are wood paneled five feet from the floor with painted plaster above. Ceilings here are dropped acoustical tile. The third floor party walls are exposed brick and the ceiling at the third floor is the original pressed metal ceiling.
5. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: The central principle entrance is not an original door. It is made of paneled wood with glass window. Interior vestibule doors are steel and glass. The second floor doors, also not original, are of wood. The third floor has no doors.
 - b. Windows: Interior trim is simple molded wood.
6. Decorative features and trim/hardware: The second floor, which functioned as a restaurant bar portion of the Chicken Hut Restaurant beginning in 1944, maintains a wood bar along the north wall. Ceiling fan lights exist here as well.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: 425-429 Eleventh Street is flanked by the six bay building at 431-437 Eleventh Street (Dart Drug/Vienna Hat Company, HABS No, D.C.-) to the north and three bay

423 Eleventh Street (Brodt's Hat Factory, HABS No. D.C.- 480)
on the south. The remainder of the east side of Eleventh Street is
comprised of three and four-story mid-Nineteenth Century commercial
structures, most of which are vacant on upper floors. The building
sits on Square 348 which is located in the center of what historically
functioned as the major newspaper printing and paper supply area
for Washington during the Nineteenth Century. Eleventh Street was
the location of various paper company warehouses, book binding
companies, hand embossing firms, and a wallpaper manufacturer. The
"Evening Star" newspaper was located on the northwest corner of
Eleventh Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, and the "Washington Herald"
was located at 425-429 Eleventh Street for many years. Stilson Hutchins
ran the National Intelligencer at the northeast corner of Tenth and
'D' Streets.

Eleventh Street itself is one of the widest north/south axes in
Washington, as was originally planned by L'Enfant.

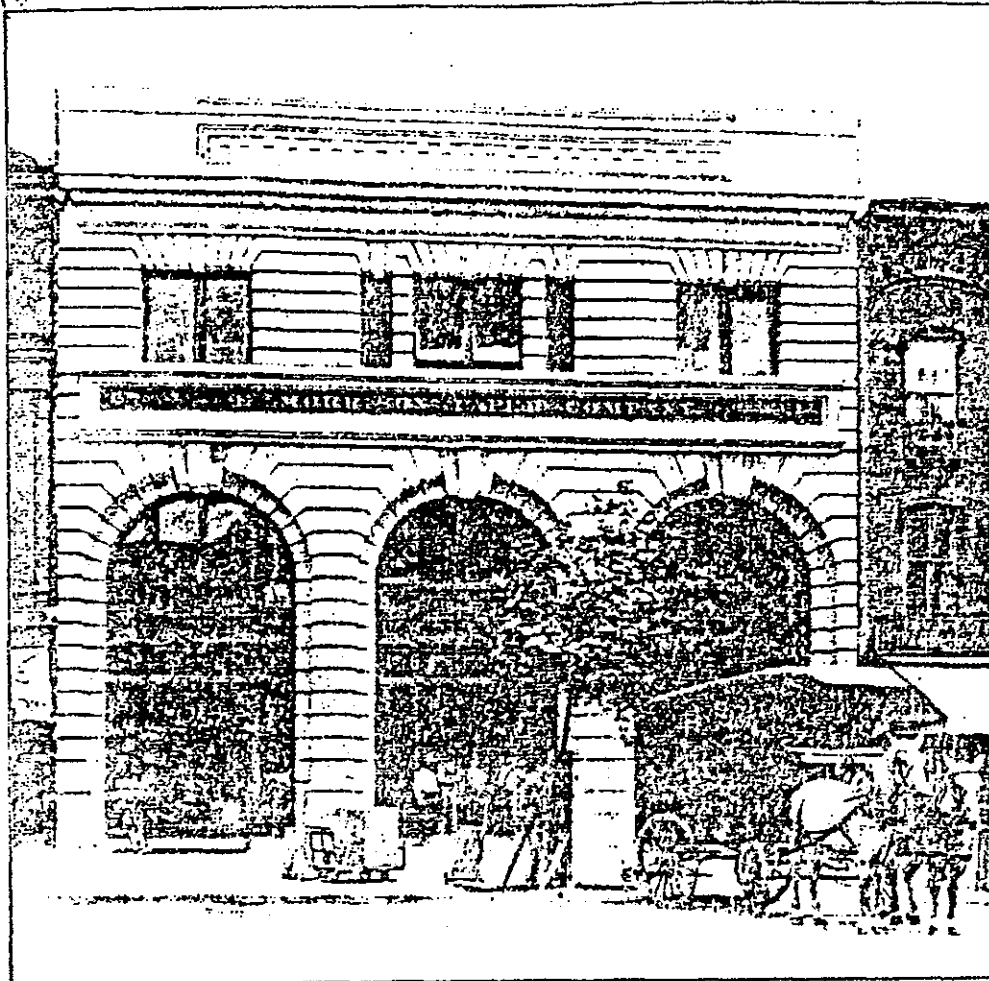
Prepared by W.F. Hunter
Historian
PADC
July 1980

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation
in compliance with Executive Order 11593 and Stipulation 6 of the PADC Memo-
randum of Agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

The recording of the project was completed under the general supervision
of Jeffrey S. Wolf, Architect with PADC. Historic data was compiled and edited
by Wendy Hunter, also with PADC. Documentary photos were taken by J. Wolf.

HABS No. DC-481 (Pg. 12 with Hoe power presses, ranging from the "junior" to the large, four-roller, two-revolution, suitable for all kinds of large work. Everything is printed in Gibson Brothers' establishment from a visiting card to a book, and every facility is afforded for folding, stalling, stitching, sewing, binding, jacking, perforating, numbering, punching, ruling paper, and card cutting. Special attention is paid to lithographing and steel and copper plate engraving. Book pages are electrotyped with care and perfection. During the prosperous and highly successful career of this firm it has done work for the leading business men of the city. From time to time it has executed large orders for the Government. Among its many productions are the American Annals of the Deaf, the Catalogue of the Corean Gallery of Art, the Transactions of the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers, the Bulletin and Proceedings of the American Institute of Architects, the Proceedings etc., of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Magazine of the National Irrigation Association, the Florence Crittenton Magazine, etc.



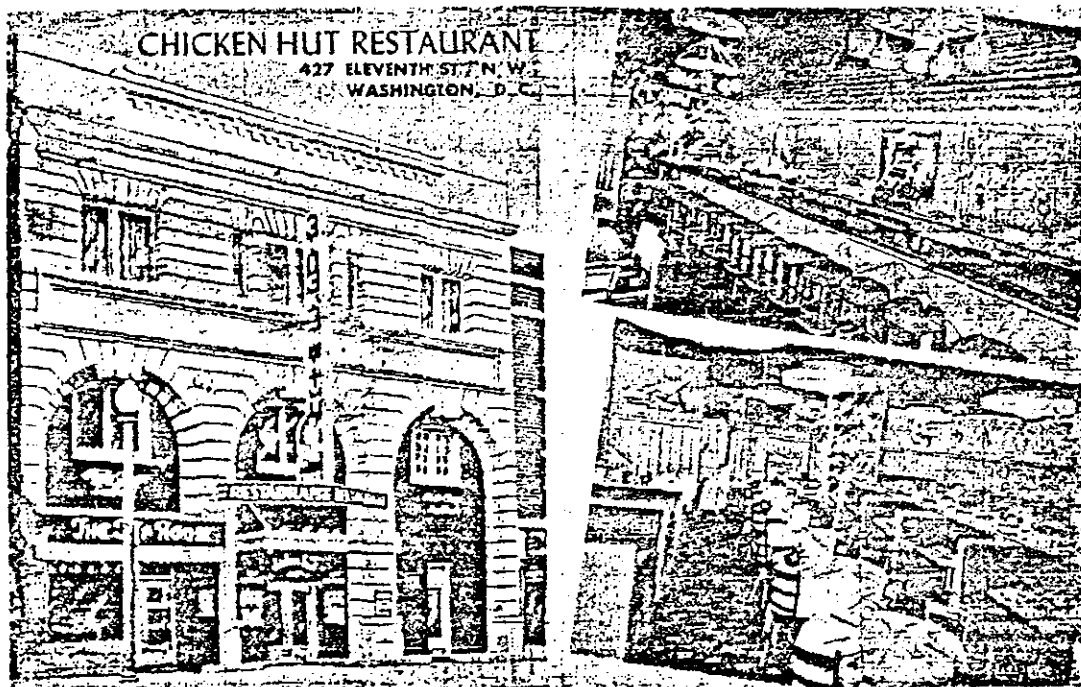
WAREHOUSE OF E. MORRISON PAPER COMPANY.

Gibson Brothers.—Among the early business enterprises founded in Washington was that of Gibson Brothers, who in the year 1862 engaged in a general printing and book binding business, and since that time this firm has so prospered and its business so expanded that now its model and complete plant, at the southeast corner of Pennsylvania avenue and Thirtieth street is second to none in the city. This house was founded by John and George Gibson, and six years after, another brother, William Gibson, was admitted to the firm. William Gibson until that time had been connected with the Baltimore Commercial, formerly the Clipper. The three brothers continued to conduct the business until 1897, when John died, leaving the establishment in the hands of George and William Gibson, until death again entered the firm, this time claiming William Gibson, who died on December 23, 1902, thus leaving George Gibson the only surviving member of the firm.

The firm's plant, at 1238 Pennsylvania avenue, is one of the most completely equipped in this section of the country. It includes every facility for printing, electrotyping and bookbinding. Steam and electric power is used, and all of the most modern machinery, including cylinder and platen presses, form part of the equipment. New and latest style type, as well as all of the old styles, are represented by scores of fonts. The press room is furnished

William Gibson, the eldest child of Joseph and Mary Gibson, who were of Anglo-Scotch descent, was born in Anghuachoy, County Tyrone, Ireland, on October 9, 1822, and was educated at Newtown-Stewart. When sixteen years old he embarked for America, landing in Philadelphia afterwards settling in Baltimore, Maryland, where he secured a position as collector with the Baltimore Clipper, daily newspaper. There he remained until the civil war broke out. As a member of the Independent Greys, a military organization he had joined in 1849, he was despatched to Harper's Ferry, in October, 1859, and figured prominently in the movements which led to the capture of John Brown. Mr. Gibson entered the Cuban Army as first lieutenant, Company A, of Purnell's Legion, Maryland Volunteer Infantry, and was promoted to a captaincy on April 24, 1861. Mr. Gibson was on duty as provost marshal at Accom Court House, Virginia, November and December, 1861 and at Eastville, Virginia, January, 1862. On March the same year, he was made quartermaster, and on August 4 he was appointed inspector of Second Maryland Brigade, Second Division of the Fifth Army Corps. Mr. Gibson saw much active service, and participated in engagements at Harper's Ferry, Chancellorsville, Virginia, South Mountain, Antietam, Shady Grove, Bethesda Church, Cold Harbor

425-427 Eleventh Street
(Alla Scala Restaurant)
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Supplemental Material
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425-527 Eleventh Street as the Chicken Hut Restaurant in 1944. (Private collection, W.F. Hunter, Washington, D.C.)